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Security Council
Fifty-fifth year

Letter dated 2 October 2000 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Eritrea to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit a statement issued on 2 October 2000 by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the State of Eritrea, on behalf of the National Assembly, regarding Ethiopia's human rights violations (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would kindly circulate the present letter and its annex as a document of the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly, under agenda items 114 (a) and (d), and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Tesfa Alem **Seyoum**
Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission
of Eritrea to the United Nations

00-66932 (E) 051000

Annex to the Letter dated 2 October 2000 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Eritrea to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Statement of the National Assembly of Eritrea on Ethiopia's human rights violations

The National Assembly:

Recalling the practice of ethnic hatred that the Ethiopian regime has been doggedly pursuing in the last two and a half years as a matter of official, publicly declared, policy to impart an ugly dimension to the conflict;

Recalling further that the Ethiopian Government has unilaterally revoked the bilateral agreements and provisions that existed between the two countries allowing each other's citizens to enjoy particular rights and privileges;

Mindful of the excessive financial and physical damages, as well as emotional and psychological trauma, that these policies have had on Eritreans and Ethiopians of Eritrean origin who have been deported en masse from Ethiopia purely on the basis of their ethnicity and through the confiscation of their life-long earnings and the cruel separation of families; often by stripping them of their citizenship retroactively in violation of international conventions that Ethiopia itself has signed;

Strongly deploring the continued detention and deaths in detention in Dediesa and other concentration camps of innocent Eritrean civilians who have been forced to languish in these prisons for more than two years now without due process of law;

Deeply concerned by the plight of over 18,000 underage Eritreans who have been left behind in Ethiopia as a result of a deliberate policy of separation of families;

Condemning further the illegal policy that the Tigre People's Liberation Front (TPLF) regime continues to pursue to obstruct family reunion by preventing Eritrean youths from returning voluntarily to their country;

Deeply disturbed by the growing reports of thousands of innocent Eritrean civilians missing in Ethiopia, and recently from the occupied areas, whose whereabouts remain unknown after being taken from their homes and workplaces by the regime's security authorities;

Deploring the wanton destruction of public, commercial and private premises, including churches, mosques, holy shrines and historical monuments and artefacts, and the looting of property that the TPLF regime has carried out and continues to perpetrate in the occupied areas, and especially prior to pulling out from sovereign Eritrean towns and cities in an act of deliberate State vandalism and in contravention of the provisions of the Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities that it signed on 18 June 2000 in Algiers;

Noting that the TPLF regime continues to plant new landmines in the occupied areas, in violation of operative paragraph 8 of the Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities as well as United Nations Security Council resolution 1320 (2000) on the deployment of the peacekeeping force;

Outraged by the groundless accusations that the TPLF regime has levelled against Eritrea claiming that thousands of its citizens are languishing in "concentration and labour camps in Eritrea" — preposterous accusations which are meant to cover up its gross violation of human rights, to absolve itself from its obligation of receiving its own nationals and to fabricate a pretext for continuing its war of invasion;

Noting with regret that lukewarm international reaction has encouraged the TPLF regime to perpetrate acts of ethnic cleansing and gross violation of human rights with impunity for the past two years;

1. Calls on the international community, and in particular the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the United Nations Commission on Human Rights, to ensure the protection of the human rights of Eritreans held hostage in the occupied areas in accordance with the Geneva Conventions, international law and paragraph 1 of United Nations Security Council resolution 1320 (2000). In this regard, the National Assembly calls for the immediate dispatch and placement of permanent human rights observer groups from ICRC, the United Nations Commission on Human Rights and other bodies to monitor the situation and ensure the provision of relief assistance to these victims;

2. Calls on the international community to put pressure on Ethiopia to release Eritrean civilian detainees in Dediesa and other concentration camps in accordance with the Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities and the provisions of the Geneva Conventions;

3. Calls upon the United Nations to expedite the deployment of the peacekeeping force so as to eliminate, as early as possible, the gross violation of human rights perpetrated by the TPLF regime in the occupied areas;

4. Urges the United Nations to put pressure on the TPLF regime to demine the landmines it has planted and to stop planting new landmines in the occupied areas in violation of operative paragraph 8 of the Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities and paragraph 7 of Security Council resolution 1320 (2000);

5. Recalling its resolution of 26 June 1998, which stressed that Eritrea would not react in a spirit of vindictiveness and reciprocity in the face of the TPLF's cruel policy of ethnic cleansing, the National Assembly underlines Ethiopia's national and international obligations to receive its own nationals and resolves to ensure that the repatriation of Ethiopians to their country will be conducted, as in the past, with safety and dignity and through the involvement of the International Committee of the Red Cross.